

# Oreoscoptes montanus

*This species is complete.*

March 17, 2010 by Jorge Tomasevic

Author(s) Expertise:

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<b>Sensitivity Factor</b>	<b>Sensitivity 1 - 7 (one being least sensitive, seven being most sensitive)</b>	<b>Confidence 1 - 5 (one being least sensitive, five being most sensitive)</b>
Generalist/Specialist	6 High	4 Good
Physiology	1 Low	1 Very Poor
Life History	3 Medium	4 Good
Habitat	7 Extremely High	3 Fair
Dispersal Ability	3 Medium	1 Very Poor
Disturbance Regimes	3 Medium	4 Good
Ecology	2 Medium-Low	3 Fair
Non-Climatic	4 Medium-High	3 Fair
Other (weight)		

Sensitivity Score : 51 Medium

## Sensitivity Score

$100 * [(0.5 * (\text{Dispersal Distance} + \text{Dispersal Barriers}) + \text{Disturbance Regimes} + (0.5 * \text{Generalist/Specialist}) + \text{Physiology} + (0.5 * \text{Life History}) + \text{Sensitive Habitats} + \text{Ecology} + \text{Non-Climatic Stressors} + (\text{Other} * \text{Weight}) / 49 + (7 * \text{Weight})]$

Note: if Sensitive Habitats are identified, this factor automatically gets a value of seven, otherwise it remains zero.

Confidence Score : 2 Poor

## Confidence Score

The Confidence Score is an average of the Confidence column above.

Overall User Ranking: 3 Medium

**Common Name:**

Sage Thrasher

**Is this Species completed:**

Yes

Taxonomy

This is a description of the whole group

**Scientific Name:**

*Oreoscoptes montanus*

**Geography:**

Entire range

**Realm:**

Terrestrial

**Kingdom:**

Animal

**Phylum:**

Craniata

**Class:**

Aves

**Order:**

Passeriformes

**Family:**

Mimidae

**Genus:**

*Oreoscoptes*

**Global Rank:**

G5

**Rounded Global Rank:**

G5 - Secure (1996)

**IUCN:**

Least concern (2009). Criteria ver 3.1.

**US Endangered Species Act Code:**

Not listed

**Species Element Code:**

ABPBK04010

**Generalist/Specialist****Broadly, where does this species fall on the spectrum of generalist to specialist? :**

6

**Confidence in your assessment of the degree to which the species is a generalist or specialist:**

4 Good

**Please specify which factors, if any, make the species more of a specialist:**

other dependencies

**Please further describe the relationships that make the species more of a specialist:**

It is considered a sagebrush (*Artemisia* spp.) obligate, generally dependent on large patches and expanses of sagebrush steppe for successful breeding (Reynolds et al. 1999). Harassment during territory establishment and predation on nestlings by Loggerhead Shrikes (*Lanius ludovicianus*) locally had significant negative impact on a breeding population of Sage Thrashers in se. Idaho

**Citations:**

Reynolds, T.D., T.D. Rich and D.A. Stephens. 1999. Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*), *The Birds of North America Online* (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/463>

**Physiology****Species' physiological sensitivity:**

1 low sensitivity

**Confidence in how physiologically sensitive the species is to climate change:**

1 Very Poor

**Comments:**

No information on physiological sensitivity on this species.

**Citations:**

Reynolds, T.D., T.D. Rich and D.A. Stephens. 1999. Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*), *The Birds of North America Online* (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/463>.

**Life History****Species' reproductive strategy:**

3

**Confidence in your assessment of the species' reproductive strategy:**

4 Good

**Is the species polycyclic, iteroparous, or semelparous?:**

Iteroparous (reproduces in successive cycles--characteristic of K-strategists)

**Average length of time to reproductive maturity:**

730

**How many surviving young can an individual produce during a single reproductive event under optimal conditions?:**

4

**How many reproductive events can an individual undergo in a single year under optimal conditions?:**

1

**Comments:**

two stages: juvenile (non-breeder) and adult (breeder)

**Citations:**

Reynolds, T.D., T.D. Rich and D.A. Stephens. 1999. Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*), The Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/463>.

**Sensitive Habitats**

**Depends on the following sensitive habitat types:**

Grasslands/balds

**Confidence in whether the species depends on the listed sensitive habitat types:**

3 Fair

**Level of philopatry:**

low

**Comments:**

Shrub-steppe dominated by big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*). Considered a sagebrush obligate, but noted in black greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*) habitat in Utah and Nevada and bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*) habitat in Washington. In s. and central Oregon Sage Thrashers were positively associated with shrubs in the 30- to 60-cm height interval, and vertical heterogeneity of the habitat (Reynolds et al. 1999).

**Citations:**

Reynolds, T.D., T.D. Rich and D.A. Stephens. 1999. Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*), The Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/463>

**Maximum annual dispersal distance:**

1-5km

**Confidence in maximum annual dispersal distance:**

1 Very Poor

**Within the context of dispersal distance above, do barriers to dispersal exist?:**

1 None

**Confidence in barriers to dispersal exists:**

2 Poor

**Comments:**

No information on dispersal.

**Citations:**

Reynolds, T.D., T.D. Rich and D.A. Stephens. 1999. Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*), The Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/463>.

Disturbance Regimes

**How sensitive is this species to one or more disturbance regimes:**

3 somewhat sensitive

**Confidence in how sensitive is this species on one or more disturbance regimes:**

4 Good

**Please check all disturbance regimes upon which the species is sensitive:**

Fire

**Please describe the disturbance regimes upon which the species is sensitive (frequency, timing, severity, duration):**

Low to medium severity fires.

**Comments:**

Sage Thrasher occurred on lower abundance on sites that were largely or completely burned relative to sites that were outside the fire perimeter or within unburned islands of shrubs (Holmes 2007)

**Citations:**

Holmes, A.L. 2007. Short-term effects of prescribed burns on songbirds and vegetation in mountain sagebrush. *Western North American Naturalist* 67: 292 - 298.

Ecological Relationships

**Please specify which of the following (if any) are sensitive to climate change for this species:**

forage

habitat  
hydrology

**Confidence in how sensitive the species is to other effects of climate change on its ecology:**

3 Fair

**Which types of climate and climate-driven changes in the environment affect these aspects of the species' ecology?:**

temperature  
precipitation

**How sensitive is this species? ecological relationships to the effects of climate change?:**

2

Interacting non-climatic stressors

**To what degree do other, non-climate-related threats, to the species make it more sensitive to climate change?:**

4

**Confidence in the degree to which non-climate-related threats affect the species' sensitivity to climate change:**

3 Fair

**Please check all of the stressors that make the species more sensitive to climate change:**

habitat loss or degradation  
invasive/exotic species  
other interspecific interactions

**Comments:**

Removal of sagebrush and conversion to other land uses is detrimental. Large scale reduction and fragmentation of sagebrush habitats is occurring in many areas due to land conversion to tilled agriculture, urban and suburban development, and road and power-line rights of way (NatureServe 2010). Grazing can increase sagebrush density, positively affecting thrasher abundance. Dense stands of sagebrush, however, are considered degraded range for livestock and may be treated to reduce or remove sagebrush. Grazing may also encourage the invasion of non-native grasses, which escalates the fire cycle and converts shrublands to annual grasslands (NatureServe 2010). Cheatgrass readily invades disturbed sites, and has come to dominate the grass-forb community of more than half the sagebrush region in the West, replacing native bunchgrasses. Cheatgrass can create a more continuous grass understory than native bunchgrasses. Dense cheatgrass cover can possibly affect foraging ability for ground foragers, and more readily carries fire than native bunchgrasses. Crested wheatgrass and other non-native annuals have also altered the grass-forb community in many areas of sagebrush shrub-steppe (NatureServe 2010). Cheatgrass has altered the natural fire regime on millions of acres in the western range, increasing the frequency, intensity, and size of range fires. Fire kills sagebrush and where non-native grasses dominate, the landscape can be converted to annual grassland as the

fire cycle escalates (NatureServe 2010). Coexists with brown-headed cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) at various points throughout range; observed to reject cowbird eggs by ejecting eggs from nest (NatureServe 2010).

**Citations:**

NatureServe. 2010. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: May 18, 2011 ).

Overall User Ranking

**In your opinion, how would you rank the overall sensitivity of this species to climate change?:**

3

**Confidence in your overall assessment of the sensitivity of this species to climate change:**

3 Fair

**Comments:**

The species may be affected by altered fire regimes and diminished water availability.

**Citations:**

IUCN 2010. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2010.1. <[www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org)>. Downloaded on 23 March 2010. NatureServe. 2009. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: March 23, 2010). Reynolds, T.D., T.D. Rich and D.A. Stephens. 1999. Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*), The Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/463>.

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